

communications and to its participation in public policy.

Daralee "Dee" Schelling passed away this week at the age of 57. She will be greatly missed.

Dee was the executive director of the New Mexico Broadcasters Association for 14 years and she was well-known among State legislators for her participation in legislative issues regarding broadcast interests.

In addition, she handled media relations for New Mexico First, an organization that Senator DOMENICI and I formed in 1986 to encourage citizens to take an active role in studying the long-range issues facing our State. Dee was with us from the beginning.

She was born in Colorado, but came to New Mexico in the mid-1960's to work in advertising. She became the first female ad agency president in our State and handled many major accounts including various movie promotions and the Double-Eagle II trans-Atlantic balloon crossing—an event which is a source of pride to New Mexicans and is commemorated at the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum.

Dee's many public service accomplishments included service on numerous Greater Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce, Ski New Mexico, and Project I committees.

She will be remembered fondly by many.

PRESS FREEDOM IN HONG KONG

Mr. PELL. Mr. President, I rise today to speak out on behalf of freedom of the press in Hong Kong. As we approach Hong Kong's July 1, 1997 transfer to control under the People's Republic of China, there is great fear that one of the fundamental tenets of a free society—freedom of the press—will not survive the transition. China's track record on press freedom leaves much to be desired; the current Hong Kong Government should be actively working to shore up legal support for the press before it hands over control to Beijing.

The grand experiment of democracy in the United States would have surely failed were it not for a free press. Our founders realized that its importance was not only for general education, but also for exposing the dangers of would-be oppressive officials and prodding leaders into more ethical behavior. Our Nation's history has proven that the scrutiny of public light forces public officials both to serve the interests of the public and to serve honestly far better than they would without that scrutiny. Benjamin Franklin once said that "whoever would overthrow the liberty of a nation must begin by subduing the freeness of speech." It is precisely this fear—that the PRC will attempt to overthrow Hong Kong's current way of life by stifling its press, with the quiet acquiescence of the current authorities—that I wish to address today.

Hong Kong boasts of one of the freest media systems in all of Asia, with more

than 70 daily newspapers. The press is privately owned, offering Hong Kong citizens access to a broad range of political and social views. But journalists in and out of Hong Kong cite the present administration's sluggish pace in revising anachronistic press laws as one of their key sources of fear for the press after 1997.

Current Hong Kong laws which restrict press freedom are rarely applied by the government, but an authoritarian regime could easily use them to prohibit the expression of any objectionable ideas. These laws—which are inconsistent with Hong Kong's own Bill of Rights—include the Emergency Regulations Ordinance, which gives the Governor broad powers of censorship during loosely defined "emergencies"; the Crimes Ordinance, which defines any publication or speech "intending" to foster hatred of the government as seditious; and the Official Secrets Act, which makes unauthorized publication of information illegal. Some of the democratically elected members of the Legislative Council, along with independent journalists groups such as the Hong Kong Journalists Association, have repeatedly urged the government to repeal or amend these laws. These same reformers have also urged the Hong Kong Governor's office to enact legislation which would provide greater access to information, similar to the United States Freedom of Information Act. But the current administration continues to move slowly, to the point of delay. There is no reason to believe that the successor Chinese administration will be any more willing to undertake these reforms; it is likely to oppose them outright. The time to make these changes is now. Above all, the government should refrain from introducing any new laws which in any way restrict the press' right to function independently. A recent call by pro-Beijing Legislator Law Cheung-kiok for hearings to consider regulating newspaper prices, a move that appears to be aimed specifically at controlling the Oriental Daily News, is exactly what the Hong Kong government should not be doing.

Joseph Pulitzer argued that "publicity may not be the only thing that is needed, but it is the one thing without which all other agencies will fail." There is no point of having a freely elected democratic government if there is no way to freely report on its actions and to expose its abuses. A free press is the only guarantor of the people's right to know what their government does and the best guarantor of their right to offer alternative views. Hong Kong's press must remain free and unrestricted if the colony's current rights are to be maintained. The colonial government has the immediate responsibility of ensuring that it does.

PROGRESS AGAINST FRAUD IN POLITICAL ASYLUM

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, this is the first anniversary of a major initia-

tive by the Immigration and Naturalization Service to reduce illegal immigration by cracking down on fraudulent asylum claims. One year ago, INS Commissioner Doris Meissner put new regulations into effect which have more than doubled the number of asylum officers, increased the number of immigration judges and streamlined the asylum application process.

The results have been dramatic. In 1 year, there has been a 57 percent reduction in new asylum applications. Clearly, there has been a reduction in the filing of fraudulent claims. In addition, 84 percent of new asylum claims are now heard by INS within 60 days. This initiative is a major success story in the Clinton administration's ongoing effort to combat illegal immigration.

In coming weeks, the Senate Judiciary Committee will recommend comprehensive immigration reforms. A large part of these reforms focus on the need to reduce illegal immigration, including steps to deal with abuse of the right of asylum.

As the INS has shown, asylum abuse can be remedied—without denying true refugees the right to apply for asylum. They deserve adequate time to learn how to apply for asylum, overcome their fear of authority, and obtain help with their applications. We must avoid unfair restrictions that result in real harm to true refugees.

I ask unanimous consent that recent articles on the major progress against asylum abuse be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the articles were ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Washington Post, Jan. 15, 1996]

SOME PROGRESS AT INS

A year ago, the Immigration and Naturalization Service put into effect new regulations to control abuse of the political asylum program. Commissioner Doris Meissner recently released figures that indicate progress. The problem has been this: Although immigration law authorizes sanctuary to be given to people in fear of political persecution at home, too many undocumented immigrants had figured out that they could indefinitely postpone deportation merely by requesting asylum. They would be automatically given work permits, and, because of the backlog of cases awaiting adjudication, they could often disappear into the general population without much chance of being found. In 1994, 123,000 new applications were filed (up from 56,000 three years earlier), and the backlog exceeded 425,000.

In response, the INS decided to issue work permits only to those granted asylum or waiting more than 180 days for an adjudication. Within a year, applications dropped by 57 percent to 53,000. Then Congress approved a request for more asylum officers and judges, and the new positions—which are still being filled—have enabled INS to complete more than twice as many cases as it did last year. Finally, most individual claims for asylum are heard within 60 days instead of waiting months, or even years, as was the case before. While the backlog remains almost unchanged, the figure is deceptive, inflated by a sizable number of petitions filed pursuant to court order by certain Salvadorans and Nicaraguans.

Although some challenge has been made to the claims of progress made by the INS, it is